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opened in such a manner as to have enabled the bird to swallow a fish apparently much broader than its own head; this, in fact, is necessary, as the bird preys much on flat fish. It is said that, in China, the natives train this bird, or one of a corresponding species, to fish for them, permitting it to dive to a considerable depth, and, when it rises again, compelling it to disgorge from its pouch the fish it had swallowed.

Several years ago, I took a pair of these birds from a nest among the rocks of Howth, and kept them for nearly two years, by which time they had attained their full growth. They were pleasant pets enough, unless when pressed by hunger, but then they became quite outrageous, and screamed most violently; when satisfied with food they slept, roosting on a large stone trough placed for holding water. But woe to the man or beast who attempted to approach them when hungry. It happened once that a gentleman's servant went in to look at them while in this state; he wore a pair of red plush livery breeches, which immediately caught the attention of the birds, I having been in the habit of feeding them with livers and lights; the consequence was, they made such a furious charge that I had to run to his assistance with a stick, and, even so, did not beat them off without difficulty. Their attack on dogs, cats, and poultry, if unprotected, was always fatal. They fought at once with their bills, wings, and claws, screaming frightfully all the time. In fact, the cause of my parting with them was their having destroyed a fine Spanish pointer; he had incautiously strayed into the place where I kept them, and they immediately flew at him, and attacked him in front and rear; his loud howlings brought me to his aid. I was astonished to find they had got him down; and, before I could rescue him from their fury, they had greatly injured him in one of his shoulders, so much so that he afterward died of the wound. This so grieved me that I gave them away to an English gentleman.

I hope you will consider the above worthy of a place in the columns of your truly national publication, in the well-doing of which, I assure you, I feel much interested.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
Suffolk-street. RICHARD GLENNON.

ANTIQUITY OF IRISH MUSIC.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE DUBLIN PENNY JOURNAL.

SIR—I have been perusing your Journal, here, with much pleasure, and particularly those portions of it devoted to the subject of *Ireland's music*. That the antiquity of Irish music has been much underrated by Mr. Moore, as represented in your Journal, I have been long convinced, but that this, my humble, though sincere opinion, may not be considered as at all intended to take from the fame and character of that eminent genius, permit me to declare that next to the honour of being a native of the country where first such exquisite music was breathed, do I estimate the pride of being born in the same isle with our talented and accomplished bard.

But, in truth, I am persuaded Mr. Moore can scarcely now retain the opinion on that subject which unluckily, and, perhaps, inadvertently, found a place in his "prefatory letter" to the *Melodies*. The late Dr. Spray, though an Englishman, was a decided maintainer of the antiquity of Irish music; and he frequently told me of his having communicated his sentiments to Mr. Moore, and especially with reference to one air, he offered to shew him by internal evidence to be found in the composition or notations of the air itself, that it was, at least, *upwards of twelve hundred years old*! These facts, also, as to other extremely ancient airs lately brought forward in your Journal, he, by this time, at least, if not heretofore, must have got some traces of. Surely the esteemed poet cannot but have read Cambrensis, who was sent over into Ireland by Henry the Second, with his son, Prince John, in 1185. So numerous are Cambrensis' misrepresentations and libels on the Irish character, that it detracts from the high name of Randolph de Glanvilla, the venerable compiler of British Common Law, then principal adviser of his Sovereign, to have permitted such a man to accompany the Prince: still

this very Cambrensis on his arrival in Ireland *six hundred and forty-eight years ago*, was so astonished, yet so charmed, with the Irish music, that in this instance his malignity ceased, and a large space in his work is devoted to an attempt to describe the accomplishments of Irish minstrels, and the irresistible effect of their fascinating science. This was six hundred and forty-eight years ago! and yet Mr. Moore assigned some two hundred and fifty years as the age of our "civilized" music. I remember, as a boy, seeing the harp of Brian Boroihme, which exists in Dublin, and the fact that such a thing *was made and used in Ireland more than eight hundred years ago* and nearly two hundred years before English connexion commenced, was one of the first facts that made me suspect there was much suppression of truth in the theory that assigns a modern date to our music. Standing before that venerable relic of Ireland's former civilization and refinement, Mr. Moore must have felt that there had been once an era, and an early one, when scientific men and "civilized airs," such as that harp was strung for, were known and encouraged in Ireland.

There are preserved in Lambeth Palace, where I perused them, certain laws passed in Ireland, in the year 1366, whereby the "Irish Minstrels," as they are specially called, were ordered to be excluded from those districts which belonged to the English Government, under pain of imprisonment and forfeiture of the instruments of their Minstrelsy—"les instrumens de leur Ministrallie." In these statutes, which have not been given by even the latest writers on Irish music, I should add, there are no less than six classes of minstrels mentioned by name, a classification that bespeaks great proficiency and variety in Irish minstrelsy so far back as four hundred and sixty-seven years since; and it is to be observed that the reason recited for expelling them, was their discovering the secrets and privities of the Government districts—a fact which inferentially establishes their accomplishments to be of the higher order, when they could procure them ingress and influence even amongst an hostile people. Their influence, however, in spite of such laws, rapidly increased, and in many years afterwards, King Henry the Sixth issued a commission, with the advice of his Lieutenant, Sir Thomas Stanley, wherein he names several classes of Irish minstrels, with others, as coming into the English districts, and receiving great gifts and goods from his lieges, for exercising their minstrelsy contrary to law, while, at the same time, as the King says, they were exploring the secrets of the district to report them to their countrymen; wherefore he orders the Marshal to enforce the above laws against them, to imprison them, seize on their horses, harness, gold, silver, goods, and the instruments of their minstrelsy, "Instrumentalia Ministralliarum suarum," and keep them for his the Marshal's proper use. Here we find the King obliged to stimulate the Marshal to enforce this law by giving him the pecuniary rewards, which under the statute ought to go to the Crown; we also see that though such statute existed, yet it had become inoperative, or was not enforced, for the King mentions that his liege people were conferring great rewards "Grandia Dona et Bona" upon those Minstrels: and coupling these facts, it is clear that the proscribed were influential by their professional talent and skill only; for between them and those "Lieges" who were rewarding them no community of language, interests, or connexions existed.

The political history of the Irish minstrels, it is evident, has not yet been written; and when its materials are collected, Mr. Moore, as well as others, will admit that the men who could cause such intense anxiety to Government for several centuries, not by force of arms, but by music only, must have been an influential and accomplished race. At present, however, one circumstance may be here alluded to, without, perhaps, encroaching too much on your limits: Queen Elizabeth aimed at the entire extirpation of the children of song; without actively forwarding the Royal intentions no favors of state could be had, and, in consequence, Lord Barrymore and others accepted commissions under the Great Seal to *hang the harpers, destroy their instruments, &c.*, whenever found. That these commissions, (one of which I lately glanced at), were rigidly executed, the favours afterwards conferred by Eli

beth, fully evince; yet, strange to say, so little did this tyranny affect the object intended, that really the national music gained ground; for, in one hundred years after, when lists or registries were made at the Revolution of 1688, of the estates and household goods belonging to King James's adherents, the ancient English or Anglo-Norman families of the pale, almost every such family, possessed "One Irish Harpe," as the same lists will fully exhibit.

I shall now conclude with a brief memoir of one ancient and truly "Civilized" Air. We are all acquainted with the Coulin or Coolan—an air, that once heard even in the earliest infancy, can never be forgotten—a melody which breathes the most touching tenderness and exquisite sensibility, and the memory of which, enables the Irish to hear Scotland's "O, Nanny wilt thou gang with me,"—or her "Banks and Braes," without envious repinings. Now, Mr. Moore following a very doubtful authority, has given us this ancient account of that melody:—"In the 28th year of the reign of Henry the Eighth, an act was made respecting the habits and dress in general of the Irish, whereby all persons were restrained from being shorn or shaven above the ears, or from wearing Glibbes, or Coullins, (long locks), on their heads, or hair on the upper lip, called Crommeal. On this occasion a song was written by one of our Bards, in which an Irish virgin is made to give the preference to her dear Coulin, (or the youth with the flowing locks), to all strangers,—by which the English were meant, or those who wore their habits. Of this song, the air alone has reached us and is universally admired." Thus the Coulin is connected with an imaginary enactment of the reign of Henry the Eighth, and the impression is made, that it was one of the "civilized airs" which were composed in or after the middle of the 16th century! It so happens, however, on turning to the above statute, that no mention is to be found therein of the Coulin, nor is there any account of such a proceeding amongst the Irish chieftains in that reign. But in the year 1295, that is five hundred and thirty-eight years ago, a Parliament was held in Dublin, and then an act was passed which more than expressly names the Coulin, and minutely describes it for its more effectual prohibition. It appears by this statute, (an extract from which, taken by me from one of the original cathedral registries is given below*), that for reasons unnecessary in this place to detail, but which are most intelligibly expressed in the statute, those persons who half shaved their heads, and encouraged the growth of their locks at the back, called "Culan," were mistaken often for another class of the inhabitants, and so caused much international rancour, wherefore it was enacted that all persons should wear, at least as to the head, the English habit and tonsure, and not presume longer to turn their hair into a "Coolan," under penalty of distraint, arrest, imprisonment, and deprivation of the benefit of the law. This, the only statute made in Ireland that names the Coulin, was passed two hundred and forty-two years

before the act cited by Mr. Moore; and, in consequence of it, some of the Irish Chieftains who lived near the seat of English government, or wished to keep up intercourse with the English districts, did, in or soon after that year, 1295, cut off their Coulin, and (the fact is worth stating) a distinct memorial of the event was made in writing by the Officers of the Crown, as I myself have seen and perused. It was, therefore, on this occasion that the bard, (ever adhesive to national habits), endeavoured to fire the patriotism of a conforming chieftain, and in the character of some favourite virgin declares her preference for her lover with the Coulin, before him who complaisantly assumed the adornments of foreign fashion. Hence the song tradition calls the "Coolin," and hence we have proofs of its composition as one of the civilized and refined Irish airs, nearly two centuries and an half before the period so erroneously alluded to.

Carleton Chambers, Regent-st.
London.

I am, &c.

W. L.

THE BENEFITS OF LIFE ASSURANCE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE DUBLIN PENNY JOURNAL.

SIR—My mind having been, of late, strongly directed towards the subject of Life Assurance, I take the liberty of addressing myself to you, in the hope that through your Penny Journal I might draw the attention of a certain class to the advantages to be derived from the system. I assure you, my good Sir, that I have no personal interest in the matter—the sudden death of a friend in the prime of life, who has left behind him an amiable and interesting family, has led me to insure my own life, and to urge others now to do the same. My friend's income, though respectable, died with himself: but having prudently allocated a portion of it every year towards the payment of a life assurance, his family are thus rescued from a double calamity, which his loss otherwise would have been to them.

I cannot expect that the working classes either could or would avail themselves of the advantages of life assurance. The Savings' Banks are the proper places for their little accumulations, because when any reverse of circumstances occurs, they can have recourse to this fund to help them in their distresses. But those who move in a somewhat better circle, whose incomes, whether derived from salary or business, enable them to maintain their families respectably, would do well to consider the propriety of setting aside an annual sum as a sinking fund for the future wants of their families. How painful is it to see a worthy lady, suddenly deprived of her guide and protector, struggling with a numerous family, who up to the period of the father's death were maintained in comfort. And even supposing that the insurer of his life lives to a good old age, why, he has a little fortune in store for perhaps an unmarried daughter, or favourite grandchildren, who might be enabled to rise above the frowns of fortune, in consequence of the prudence and foresight of the "dear old man." But lest you should think that I myself am a doating old fellow, I will close this note, by recommending to the attentive perusal of your readers the following remarks, extracted with little alteration from the British Almanack. M.

"Life Assurance Companies may be placed amongst the most useful institutions of modern times, and their increase shews that their value is becoming duly appreciated. Still the nature of them is very imperfectly understood by the generality of that class, whose peculiar interest it is to have a correct knowledge on the subject. It is of consequence to those of moderate income, that every facility should be afforded them for acquiring information, by which they may readily ascertain how the advantages which this system offers may be obtained in the best and cheapest manner.

"Previously to these institutions being so general, the man who could save a very small portion of a very limited income, despaired of ever accumulating sufficient for any pittance for his children, and he became reckless of attaining so apparently hopeless an object; the trouble

* Extract from the Act of 1295, referred to—"Anglici etiam quasi degeneres modernis temporibus Hibernicalibus se inducent vestimentis, et habentes Capita semirasa Capellos a retro Capitis nutriunt et allongant, et illos CULAN vocant, Hibernicis tam habitu quam facie se conformantes; per quod frequenter accidit Anglicos quosdam pro Hibernicis interfici, licet Anglicorum et Hibernicorum occisio diversos modos postulat puniendi; per occasionem hujus inter quamplurimos inimicitia materia generatur et rancoris, affines quoque tam occisoris quam occisi saepe [prostratum suum] alternatim velut inimici. Et eo circo concordatum est et concessum quod omnes Anglici in hac terra saltem in capite, quod plus visui se presintat mores et tonsuram gerant Anglicorum nec amplius presumant avertere Comas in COLANUM quod si fecerint Justiciarius Vicecomes Seneschallus Libertatum Domini etiam in quorum Dominio Anglici hujusmodi reperiantur et eorum Seneschalli Anglicos illos per terras et catalla sua nocent et per arrestationem corporis sui et imprisonmentum si notorium fuerit habitum Hibernicalim Saltem in Capite seu Capellis relinquere distringant et compellant; nec amplius respondeatur Anglico caput habenti in forma Hibernici transmutatum quam Hibernico respondetur si in casu consimili questus esset."